

Lights! Camera! Action! Roll 'em!

By GENE GREY

At the Experimental Television Center in Binghamton, more than 120 youngsters are getting a chance to see what it is like on the other side of the tube.

Children from the Broome County Summer Fun day programs have been going each Tuesday and Wednesday to the second-story center, where they have been learning how television works.

But the best part of the lesson is making their own programs, which they film on videotape.

Brian Byrnes, video coordinator at the center, said the purpose of the program is to show youngsters, who spend a considerable amount of time in front of the tube, a chance to learn how those images are created.

The youngsters work in three groups of three to rehearse and tape their shows. Each group has its own cameraman, camera and monitor. They can see what they're filming, while they are filming. On one recent Tuesday, five from St. Cyril's Church were working on a song, another half-dozen from Redeemer Lutheran Church were practicing three skits, and a third half-dozen kids from St. Paul's Church were rehearsing their own abbreviated version of "Goldilocks."

"We try to get kids to do original things instead of trying to copy other television shows, which they sometimes want to do," said Byrnes.

This is the program's second year at the center. Last year, only 30 youngsters could participate.

Byrnes said it was so popular that the center was asked to expand the project this year. "It is the type of program that no one else in the area could do," he said, "because we are the only such type facility in the area. We have enough equipment to do it."

The Experimental Television Center is funded by the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The summer camp groups pay no fee for the three-week project. "I don't think any of the groups who have been coming could really afford to do something like this on their own," said Byrnes.

He hopes that the program can continue, but, like many in the arts, fears that if funding is reduced next year, the program may have to pull in its horns.

As it is, there weren't enough funds available to provide videotape for the children's project, so Ashton Communications of Binghamton donated the tape.

Although it got hectic occasionally, the three groups managed to rehearse their skits and get several of their attempts on tape. Through squeals of laughter, they saw themselves as instant TV stars when the skits were played back.

Counselors from the summer programs worked with each group and often got themselves involved by handling microphones or directing the fledgling performers.

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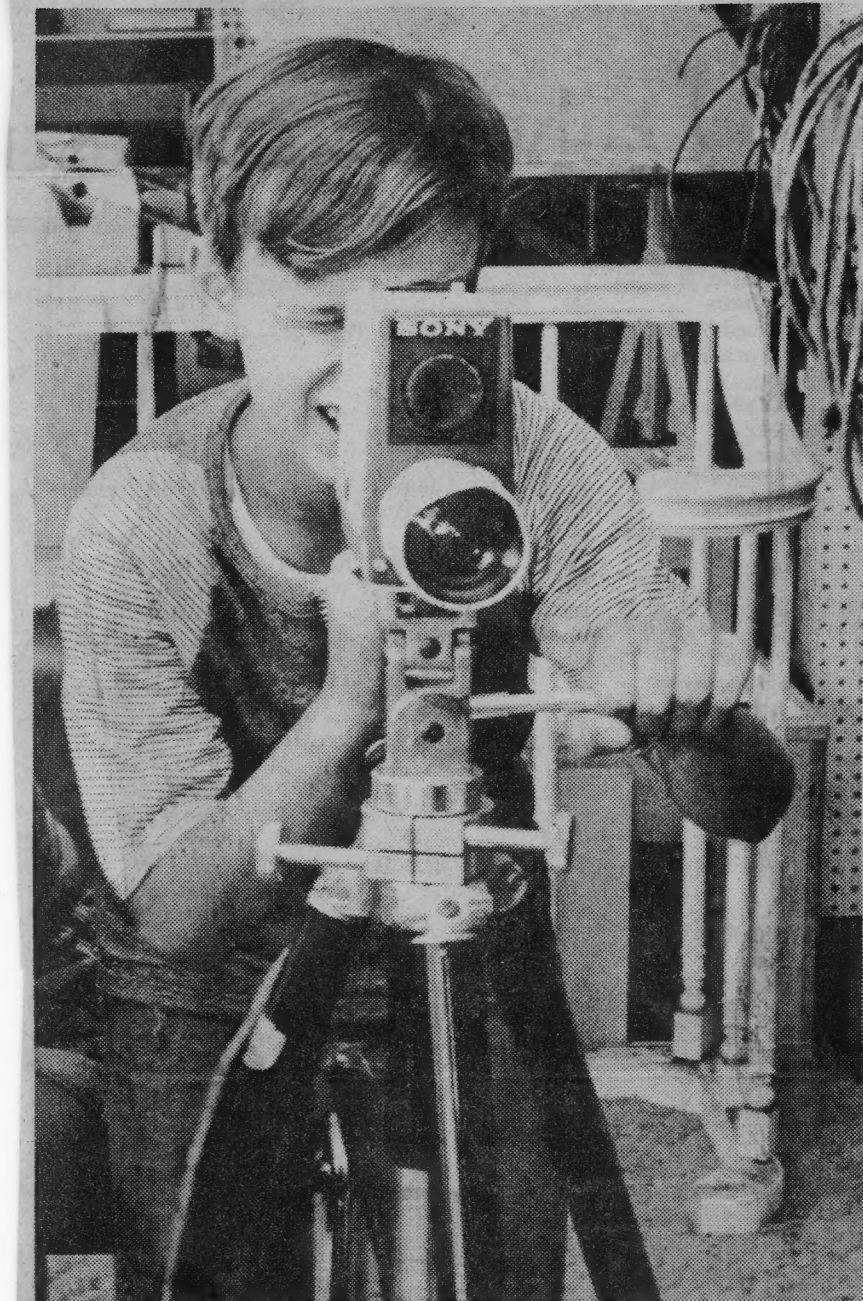
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work and talk about what they've learned.

It isn't likely that any of the videotape programs will get an Emmy, but to the youngsters, it was top-grade entertainment.

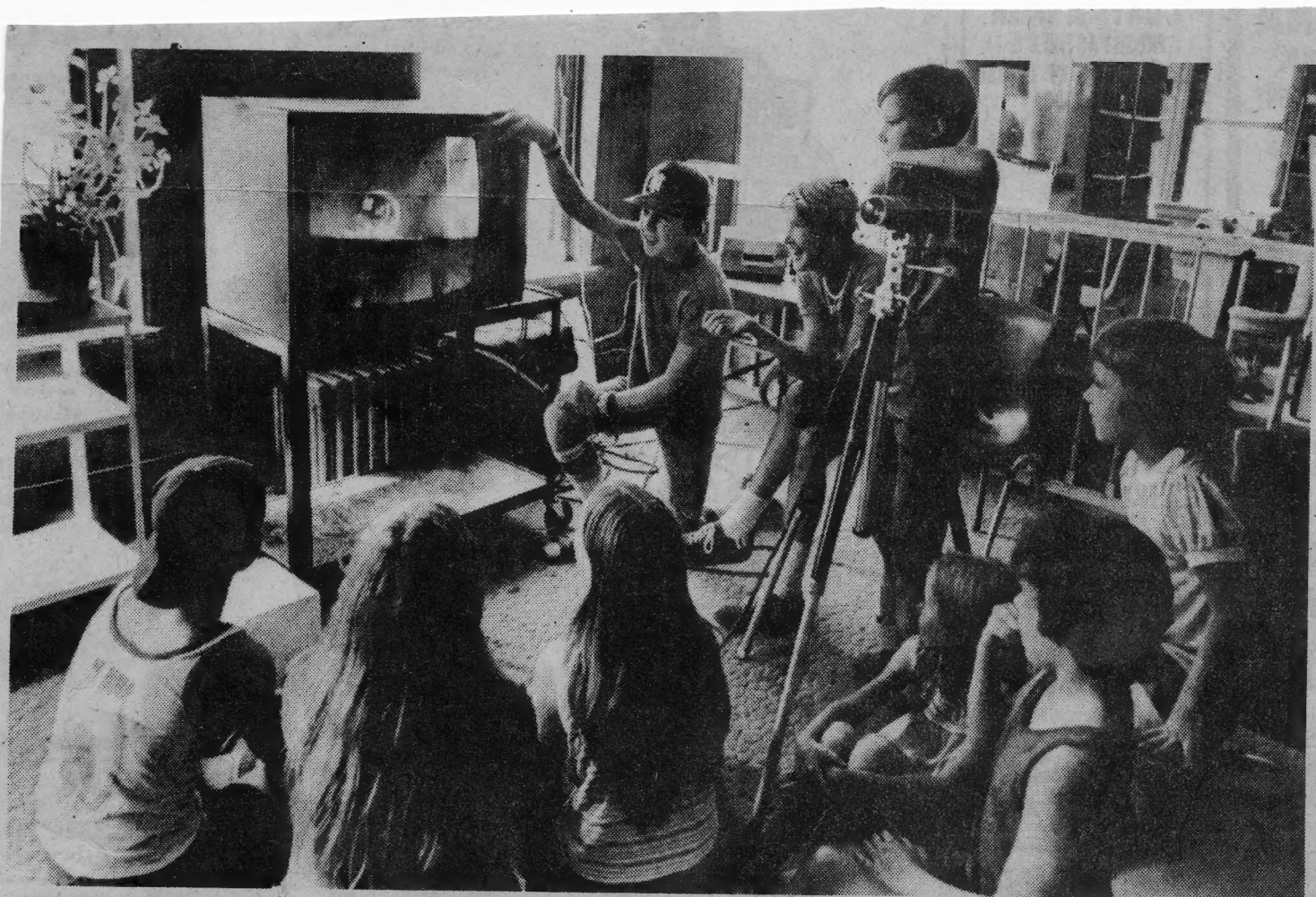
From the center's standpoint, youngsters received a chance to see the "total picture" of television and to see that TV can be used for more than just showing cops and robbers and Sonny and Cher.





RENEE MYRAE PHOTOS

Eddie Lynch, 12, of Binghamton is the cameraman.



More than 120 children from St. Cyril's School are taking part in three-week program at Experimental Television Center.